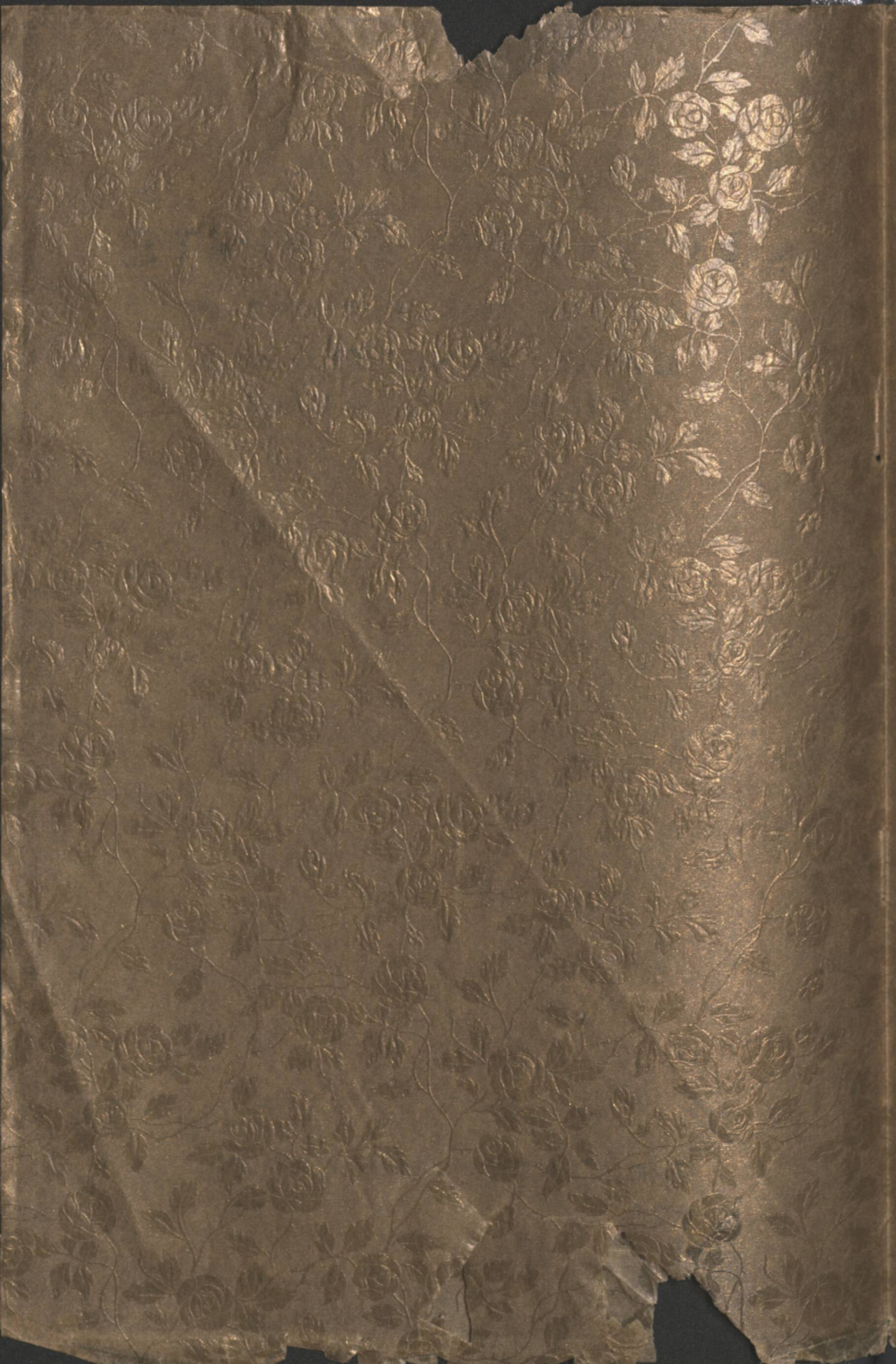


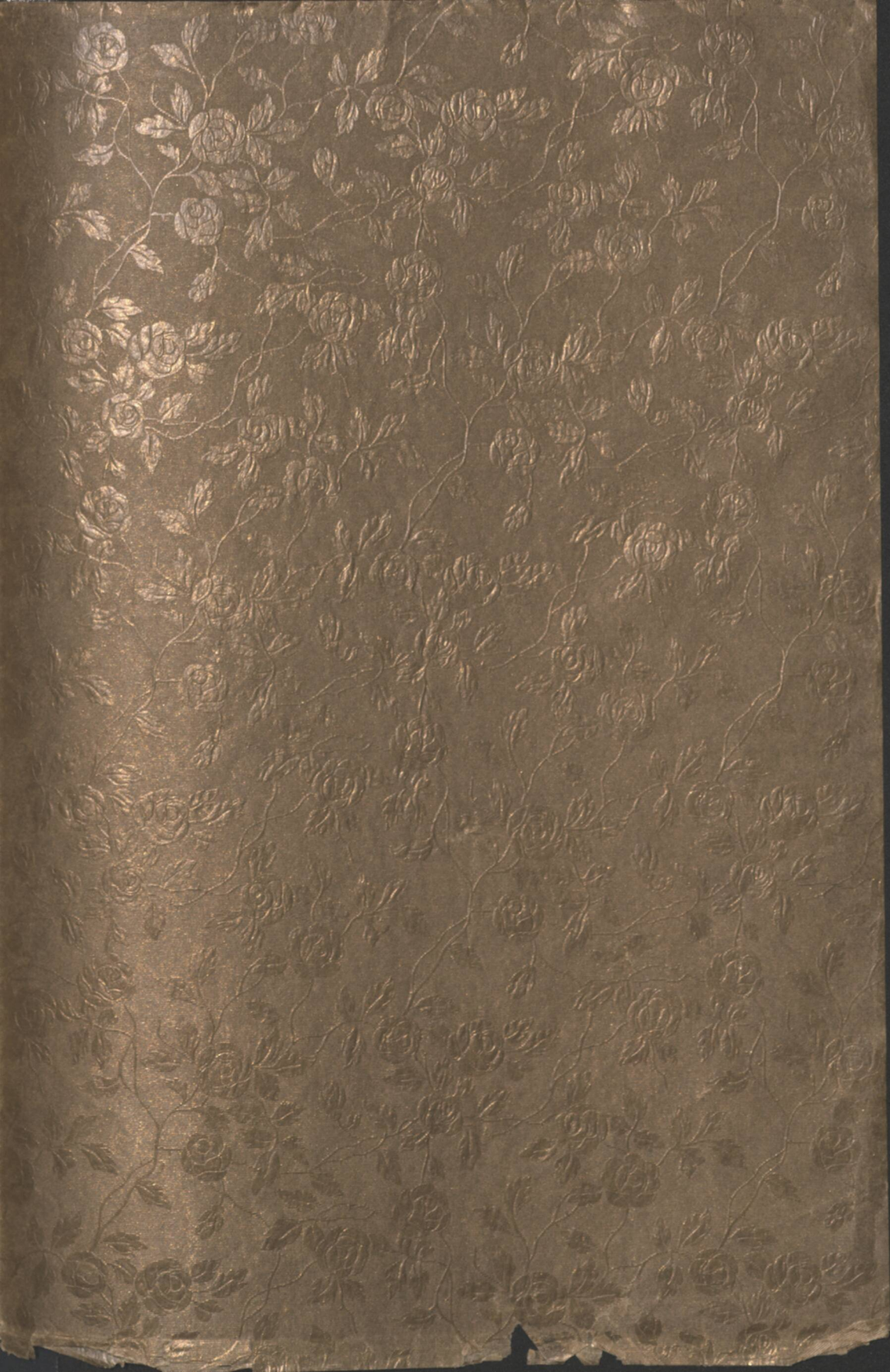
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JAPANESE PRINTS

FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF
HOWARD MANSFIELD AND
LOUIS V. LEDOUX

THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION





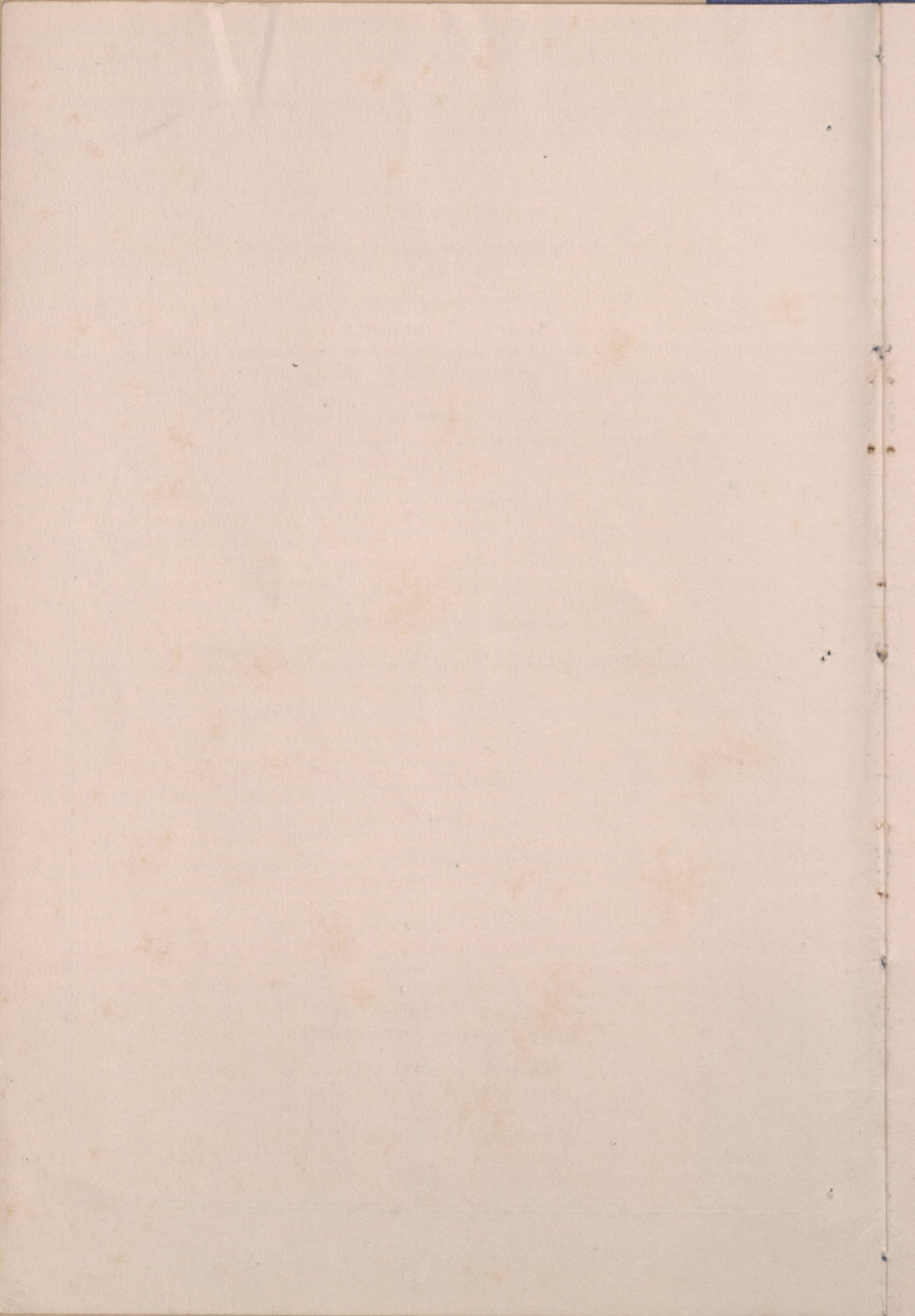


Catalogue of
AN EXHIBITION OF
JAPANESE PRINTS

FROM THE COLLECTIONS OF
HOWARD MANSFIELD AND LOUIS V. LEDOUX



HELD IN THE GALLERY OF
THE CENTURY ASSOCIATION
October 1st to 31st, 1927



INTRODUCTION

At the time when Giotto and Cimabue were leading Europe from the Dark Ages toward the Renaissance, at least two important schools of Japanese painting were able to look back on some centuries of splendid achievement. One of these, the Tosa, concerned itself chiefly with the affairs of this world, avoiding religious subjects or treating them with comparative levity; it delighted in the incongruities of life, in action, in humor. Tosa painters belonged, in the main, to the nobility or the priesthood; Tosa painting was a polite accomplishment of the upper classes as well as the chosen medium of a distinguished line of professional artists.

In the 17th Century, after the founding of the gay, new capital, now Tokyo, and their own rise to affluence, the middle classes demanded a form of art that would illustrate the life they lived, rich, sensuous, filled with color and romance. Such possibilities were latent in the Tosa tradition, and from this a new school was developed by men of the people who themselves were living the life that is depicted on the walls of this gallery. The earlier artists of the new school were primarily painters, but whether they themselves led the public or merely took the easiest way to satisfy an enormous and increasing popular demand, most of them turned their attention to the making of designs for prints—engravings from wood-blocks cut by hand. It is thus that the Japanese print came into being.

These artists of the popular school cared little for the traditions of classical painting, they disregarded religion or treated it with scant reverence; they shut their eyes to the sordidness and tragedy of life; they lived only in the sunlight, felt only the glamor of daily existence, the beauty of the world of sense.

The prints they made cheaply and sold by thousands, served the purpose of our Sunday supplements. They depicted the famous actors and popular courtesans of the time; they were used as fashion plates; people who came up from the country took them home to show the styles of the hour, the brilliant life of the capital; they were the Vogue and Theatre Magazine of their time, and they record, in minute detail, a life that has gone. If Japanese prints were merely a record of the past they would have only ethnological value; it happens, however, that they are marvels of design, marvels of line and color, marvels of technical achievement, and that they preserve the life of a bygone day with such a passionate sense of its joy and beauty, with such sensitive appreciation of its fleeting loveliness, that they have won for themselves a place apart in the affections of the world.

At first prints were made only from one block, the picture being in black outline on white paper. A gradual development of the art of color printing is shown in this exhibition and its various stages will be pointed out in the catalogue.

A number of the prints exhibited here have been fully described with reference to their background in folk-lore and poetry, in an elaborate two-volume catalogue published by the Grolier Club of New York in 1924. A copy of this will be found in the room with the present exhibition, and in the following catalogue references are given for prints described more fully in the Grolier Club publication, so that those who wish to know more about them may look up what has been said. The fact that the compiler of the two catalogues is the same has emboldened him to quote largely from the earlier and more elaborate work in the present brief list which is not for publication.

CATALOGUE

The earliest prints to be issued in sets or separately, as prints and not merely as book illustrations, were printed only in black outline on white paper and from a single block. After the invention of color printing the sheet on which the finished picture was to be, passed sometimes through as many as thirty printings, each from a separate block.

SINGLE BLOCK PRINT

- 1 **Moronobu**—Lovers with a Servant. An "ink-print" from a single block. This print long known as a fine example of the work of Moronobu has recently been attributed, perhaps correctly, by a Japanese scholar, to Sugimura who was frequently known as Masataka. It was issued in one of the closing years of the 17th century—perhaps about 1684.

PRINTS COLORED BY HAND

Almost from the beginning some impressions of the black and white ink-prints had been colored by hand; but as the art of printing developed and prints became popular, hand coloring became the rule rather than the exception, and was done much more carefully, either by the artist himself or under his direction. At first a dull orange, called *tan* was the only pigment applied, but soon other colors were added, the total effect frequently being heightened by the use of gold powder and black lacquer.

2. **Kiyomasu**—Monaka, a famous beauty in her day, reading a poem. This print was published about 1715. GC Vol. I, No. 4
3. **Kiyonobu First**—The actor, Ichikawa Monnosuke first, in the rôle of an exhibitor of trained monkeys. GC Vol. I, No. 6
4. **Kondo Kiyoharu** (Attributed)—A Buddhist nun, or possibly the actor Sanjō Kantarō in the rôle of a Buddhist nun.
5. **Toshinobu** (Attributed)—A woman fantastically dressed who very possibly represents Izumo no Okuni—the founder of the popular theatre, or one of her followers; and is a seller of love-prophecies. It is possible that this print was not designed by the short-lived Toshinobu, but by his father, Masanobu, an example of whose later work may be seen in No. 7.

EXPERIMENTS IN COLOR PRINTING

Shortly after 1740, it was discovered that by the use of a simple device to insure perfect register, two color blocks could be added to the black-outline keyblock, the sheet on which the finished print was to appear being pressed on each of these in turn. Two-color prints are called Beniye because beni—a somewhat evanescent rose—always was used, the other color being at first green and afterwards either green or blue. A little later a fourth block was added,

but was not always used; and, as experiments in over-printing were made, the range of color was greatly increased before the final development of full polychrome printing about 1765.

6. **Kiyomitsu**—The actor Bando Hikosaburō holding a bow.
7. **Masanobu**—The ill-starred heroine of a theatrical tragedy strolling with her lover. GC Vol. I, No. 15
8. **Toyonobu**—Actors in male parts in a play about the Soga Brothers revenge. GC Vol. I, No. 13
9. **Kiyohiro**—Actors as lovers walking together under a partly closed umbrella. The clappers above are a Japanese form of scarecrow—boards with pieces of bamboo loosely attached to them that blow in the wind and frighten birds from the fields.
10. **Kiyohiro**—Young lovers standing under a willow. These again are actors in a scene from a play.
11. **Kiyohiro**—The actor Segawa Kikunojō who was famous for his grace in women's parts, with a poem above descriptive of his great popularity and signed by himself. GC Vol. I, No. 16
12. **Toyonobu**—Actors with an open umbrella.

FULL COLOR PRINTING

The process of full color printing was fully developed by 1765 but did not reach its climax of intricacy and technical perfection until the closing years of the Century.

13. **Bunchō**—Another portrait of the actor shown in No. 11, but this time as a woman in white under snow-laden branches. The print is in comparatively poor condition, but is notable in its design and feeling.
14. **Harunobu**—Girl on Bridge. This print was issued for New Year of 1765 and illustrates the type of color used by Harunobu just before the invention of the full color process. No other impression of this subject appears to have survived, and the print has long been famous, though never before exhibited in New York. Harunobu did not depict the courtesans and actors, he was the artist of youth and springtime and young love. There is a delicate grace and charm in his work that is all his own. His subjects usually are scenes from the life of the young girls of the *bourgeoisie*. His women are delicate, flower-like creatures, quite different from those of Utamaro and Kiyonaga.
15. **Harunobu**—Girls going to bathe, one carries a towel and a bathrobe.
16. **Harunobu**—A young girl as Moso. This is a burlesque of Chinese moralizing. GC Vol. I, No. 22
17. **Harunobu**—Young lovers walking under snow-laden willow branches. This is one of the most famous of all subjects by Harunobu and one of the loveliest of Japanese prints. The impression exhibited is in splendid preservation and in the first state of the print. GC Vol. I, No. 33

18. **Harunobu**—A young woman reading by the light of a portable lamp.
19. **Harunobu**—Lovers with Samisen beside a stream in which iris is growing.
20. **Harunobu**—Lovers on the bank of a stream looking at Mandarin ducks in the water and on the opposite shore. No other impression of this print appears to have been recorded. The Mandarin ducks symbolize conjugal fidelity and in the poem on the print the girl wishes that her lover were bound to her by a pledge that could not be broken.
21. **Harunobu**—A young lady who received so many love-letters that she was obliged to have an ox carry them for her. The background of evanescent blue that was in many of Harunobu's prints is here only partly decomposed.
22. **Harunobu**—A girl with her maid by the sea. GC Vol. I, No. 31
23. **Harunobu**—Young woman before a torii, carrying a hammer and nails with which to perform an incantation. The subject suggests a well known idyll of Theocritus.
24. **Shunshō**—The actor Nakamura Nakazō as a Buddhist pilgrim. He carries the pilgrim's staff, and on his back is a portable shrine bearing an inscription which reads: "The most famous man of past or present in all the sixty-six provinces." These actor prints represented moments of intensity in plays that were being produced at the time. Frequently it is possible to identify the rôle, but in this case the identification is uncertain.
25. **Shunshō**—The great actor Ichikawa Danjurō Fifth as a Buddhist monk, standing beside a large temple bell.
26. **Shunshō**—"The Red Danjurō." The same actor in an interlude. GC Vol. I, No. 46
27. **Shunshō**—"The Black Danjurō." The same actor again, but in a different part. GC Vol. I, No. 47
28. **Shunyei**—Bust portrait of an actor as a nobleman, holding a closed yellow fan. His black head-dress is lacquered and there is a beautifully printed pattern in black in his black robe.
29. **Sharaku**—The actor Ichikawa Komazō in black. Sharaku, the great satirist, only made prints for a very brief period—in 1794 and 1795. The public of his day were enthusiastic about their favorite actors and did not care to see them treated with that curious mixture of savage scorn and of humor that Sharaku put into his characterizations.
30. **Sharaku**—If it may be permitted to be technical for a moment in such a catalogue as this, it should be said that this subject, which is one of the greatest satirical portraits by Sharaku, has long been believed to represent Moronao—the villain of that most popular of all Japanese plays Chushingura; recent Japanese scholarship, however, has shown that the villain in this case was not Moronao, but Lord Hosokawa.

GC Vol. I, No. 71

31. **Sharaku**—A wrestler being coached by his manager. An extraordinary piece of humorous appreciation and of characterization.
32. **Sharaku**—Scene from a play in which a country nobleman who had come up to the capital, eventually murdered a woman of the town because she refused to accompany him back to his province.
33. **Sharaku**—Bust portrait of the actor Onoye Matsusuke in green.
34. **Koriusai**—The courtesan Nishikigi followed by her attendants. From a series of fashion plates for the *demi-monde*.
35. **Shunkō**—Actor in black standing in the snow under a willow.
36. **Shigemasa**—A group of women.
37. **Shigemasa**—Two girls in thin summer kimono.
38. **Kiyonaga**—A court lady of an earlier age in the old costume. The figures of Kiyonaga are more stately, more nobly proportioned than those of Harunobu, but lack the delicate charm imparted by the earlier master. A little later elongated, slim figures became the fashion; the women of Yeishi and Utamaro being again of a different type.
39. **Kiyonaga**—A young man with two Geisha. Note the perfect placing of the black tobacco pouch in the foreground.
40. **Kiyonaga**—A courtesan followed by her attendants. This is from the same set of fashion plates as No. 34. It is in perfect preservation with the embossing clearly visible.
41. **Kiyonaga**—An actor at home, or perhaps in his dressing room, with two Geisha.
42. **Kiyonaga**—The salt gatherers. GC Vol. I, No. 83
43. and 44. **Shunchō**—A group of women in a garden.
45. **Choki**—A woman and child at night hunting fireflies. This print has been much admired in Europe but has never before been exhibited in New York.
46. **Hosoda Yeiri**—Portrait of the novelist Kyōden, who in his earlier years designed prints under the name of Kitao Masanobu. This is another famous print and in a remarkable state of preservation.
47. **Utamaro**—A woman seated.
48. **Utamaro**—A man in black and a woman in rose. This print is from a series of fanciful portraits of lovers famous in romance.
49. **Utamaro**—Portrait of Okita who was a waitress in a well known tea-house, carrying a bowl of tea. GC Vol. I, No. 102
50. **Utamaro**—Half length of two women.
51. **Utamaro**—The elopement. GC Vol. I. No. 97
52. **Utamaro**—A woman seated looking down at her white robe which, it may be noted, has been printed without the use of a key-block, the folds of the robe being indicated not by black bounding lines but by gaufrage. GC Vol. I, No. 98

53. **Utamaro**—A sheet from Utamaro's most famous triptych, the *Awabi Divers*. *Awabi* is a kind of shellfish which women get from the sea. The drawing of the nude is unusual in Japanese art and is superbly done here.
54. **Utamaro**—A group of girls preparing for a fancy dress party.
55. **Utamaro**—A young woman of good society walking with an open fan and open umbrella. This print is from a series entitled "Ten young women judged by a study of their faces," and it bears the curious signature, "Utamaro the Physiognomist after mature consideration." A splendid print in perfect preservation.
56. **Utamaro**—A woman with a towel. This also is from a series of women judged by their faces; the girl represented being *The Frivolous Type*.
57. **Yeishi**—Geisha in green standing, her musical instrument is at her feet.
58. **Yeishi**—An episode in the life of that legendary heroine *Komachi* whose career is described in the *Grolier Catalogue* Volume one number 107.
59. **Toyokuni**—Bust portrait of an actor in his part, a very unusual and very powerful work.
60. **Toyokuni**—The actor *Matsumoto Koshirō* as a man of rank.
61. **Toyokuni**—An actor striding forward at some tense dramatic moment.
62. **Toyokuni**—The same actor as the last, drawing his sword. This print and number 60 are from *Toyokuni's* finest series entitled "Portraits of actors on the stage". They were published about 1795.

LANDSCAPES

By the early years of the 19th Century the public for whom prints were made had begun to weary of the pleasures of the town and turn to the pleasures of the country. At the same time there was a marked decadence in the production of figure prints, but the two great landscape artists, *Hokusai* and *Hiroshige*, prolonged the life of the Japanese print for another fifty years.

63. **Hokusai**—The Chinese Poet, *Li-Po* beside a waterfall. From a series of large upright prints illustrating classical Chinese poems.
64. **Hokusai**—Women on a balcony overlooking the *Sumida* River. In *Hokusai's* style of about 1798. *GC Vol. II, No. 9*
65. **Hokusai**—*Morning Glories*.
66. **Hokusai**—A woman of the upper classes riding an ox and playing the flute. There are allusions back of many Japanese prints. Some of the references that would be understood by a Japanese who looked at this print are indicated in the description of it in Volume II of the *Grolier Catalogue*, number 8, but back of the story of *Michizane* there is an ancient Chinese fable illustrating the conquest of mind over matter—the spirit over the body. This struggle is indicated by the

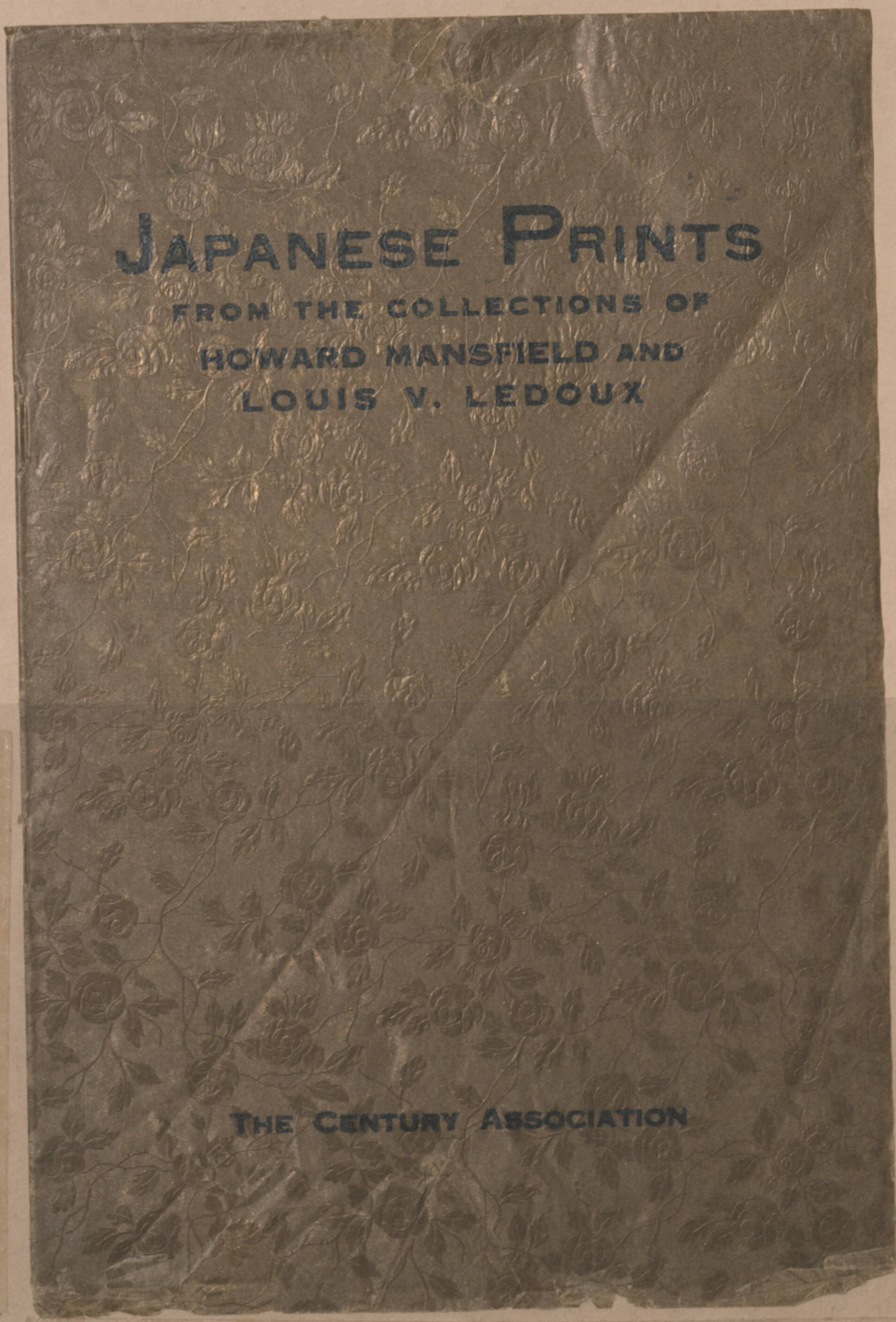
story of a herdsman attempting to master an ox. When he is able to ride the animal playing his flute the while, a complete conquest of the lower by the higher has been attained. The print probably was issued in 1793.

67. **Hokusai**—A view of Fuji from Suwa Lake. The prints of Hokusai's views of Fuji were published in several successive states and various colors. The earliest and finest impressions (ca. 1823) are almost entirely in blue, like this print and the two that follow.
68. **Hokusai**—The Great Wave. One of Hokusai's most famous designs.
69. **Hokusai**—Fisherman on a Rock. Another famous subject and an extraordinarily fine impression of it. The subject is discussed in the Grolier Catalogue Volume II, No. 31.
70. **Hokusai**—The Guard on the Mountains. From the 100 Poem Set. The poem on this print is given in the Grolier Catalogue Volume II, No. 16.
71. **Hiroshige**—Heron in Reeds—an unusually fine impression.
72. **Hiroshige**—The Sleepy Owl. The poem is translated in the Grolier Catalogue Volume II, No. 68.
73. **Hiroshige**—Morning Glories. GC Vol. II, No. 56
74. **Hiroshige**—Full moon and geese at Takanawa. This print and the next are from the earliest of Hiroshige's famous landscape sets. Ordinary impressions are printed chiefly in brown, and ones like these in blue are as rare as they are beautiful. No other impression in blue of this print is known by the writer, and only two others in blue of the print that follows have come to his attention.
75. **Hiroshige**—Twilight moon at Ryōgoku Bridge.
76. **Hiroshige**—Gyotoku from the so-called "Letter-sheet Set."
GC Vol. II, Page 63
77. **Hiroshige**—The snow scene from the rare set entitled "Poems of China and Japan."
GC Vol. II, No. 94
78. **Hiroshige**—Evening rain at Azuma. From the set of Yedo Kinko Hakkei.
GC Vol. II, No. 109
79. **Hiroshige**—The Bow Moon. GC Vol. II, No. 92
80. **Hiroshige**—Kameyama. Clear weather after snow. Tokaido Set.
81. **Hiroshige**—Ohashi. The Bridge in rain. From the 100 Views of Yedo.
GC Vol. II, No. 119
82. **Hiroshige**—Autumn moon on the Tama River. From the set of Yedo Kinko Hakkei.
GC Vol. II, No. 111
83. **Hiroshige**—Oji. The Fox-fires. From the 100 Views of Yedo.
GC Vol. II, No. 120



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